

A NEW SUBSPECIES OF *SIPTORNIS STRIATICOLLIS* (AVES: FURNARIIDAE) FROM THE EASTERN SLOPE OF THE ANDES

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Abstract.—A new subspecies, *Siptornis striaticollis nortoni*, is described from the eastern slope of the Andes in Ecuador and northwestern Peru. The nominate form, *S. s. striaticollis*, is restricted to the Magdalena Valley of Colombia.

Until recently, the Spectacled Prickletail (*Siptornis striaticollis*) was known only from “Bogotá” trade skins without specific locality data, a few specimens collected in the Magdalena Valley of Colombia, and a single specimen from Mapoto on the eastern slope of the Ecuadorian Andes (Chapman 1917, Hellmayr 1925). Difference in plumage color among individuals was noted by Chapman and Hellmayr, but the lack of comparative material from known localities prevented them from assessing geographic variation among populations. Thus, *Siptornis striaticollis* has been considered monotypic (Peters 1951).

During the past twenty years a small number of prickletails were collected on expeditions to the eastern slope of the Andes in Ecuador and northwestern Peru (Eley et al. 1979; unreported specimens). We assembled specimens with definite locality data and compared them with the type (“Colombia” = “Bogotá”) in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, and a series of “Bogotá” trade skins. Populations from the eastern slope of the Andes in Ecuador and Peru differ from those of the Magdalena Valley and from “Bogotá” specimens and represent a new subspecies.

Siptornis striaticollis nortoni,
new subspecies
Figs. 1, 2

Holotype.—Museum of Comparative Zoology, MCZ 298995; female, from Palm

Peak on Volcán Sumaco, Provincia de Napo, Ecuador, elevation 1500 m; 7 Aug 1964, David W. Norton (original number 1277).

Characters.—Compared to *S. s. striaticollis*, the buffy central stripe on the feathers of the upper breast of *S. s. nortoni* are much wider and longer (Fig. 1) The white subocular spot and scattered white feathers on the forehead of *S. s. striaticollis* are largely absent in *S. s. nortoni*; white facial feathers



Fig. 1. Ventral view of typical specimens of *Siptornis s. striaticollis* (left; ANSP 155471 ♂, La Candela, Dpto. Huila, Colombia) and *S. s. nortoni* (right; type).

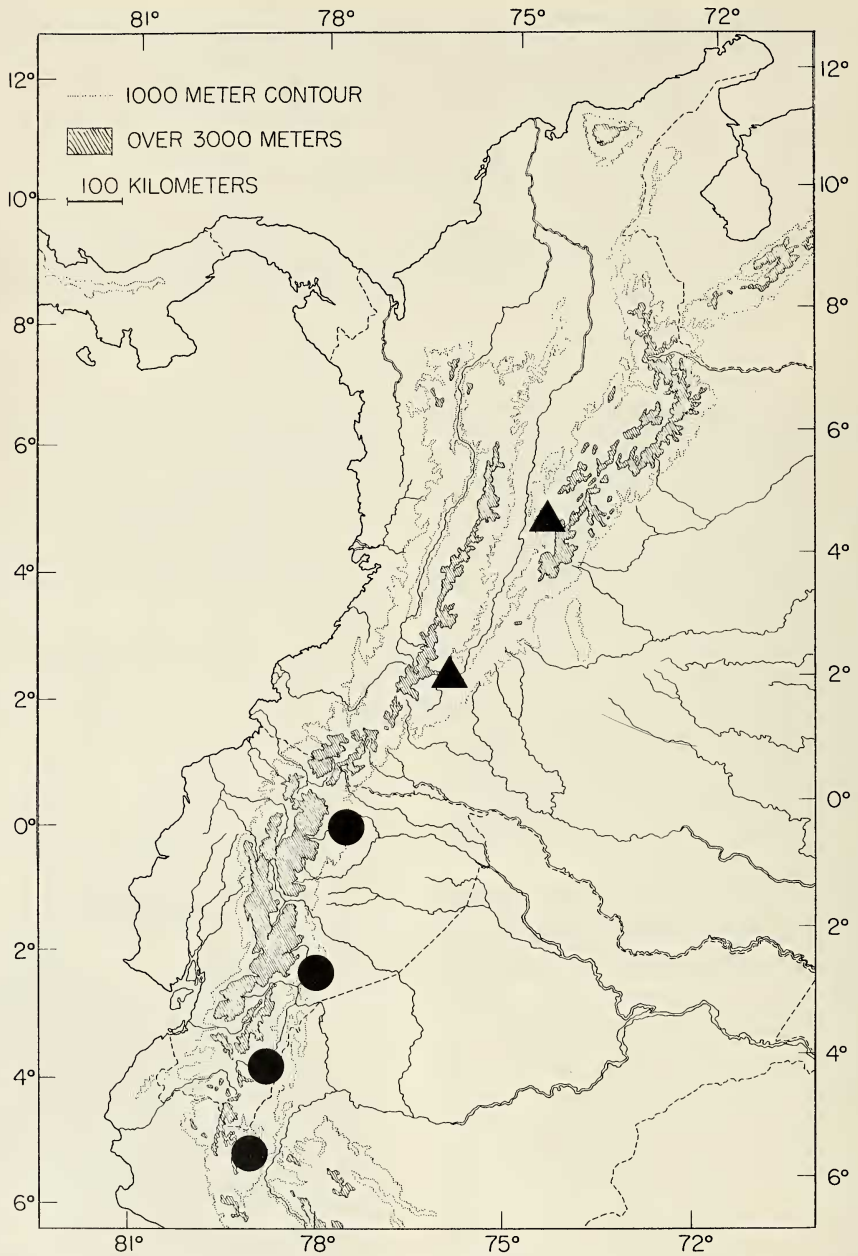


Fig. 2. Distribution of *Siptornis striaticollis* in the northern Andes of South America based on specimens examined in this study (triangles = *S. s. striaticollis*; circles = *S. s. nortoni*). Specimens from La Palma and La Candela are represented by the same triangle in the upper Magdalena valley.

are restricted primarily to the postocular portion of the superciliary. The lores are buffy gray to gray, not dark gray or black as in *S. s. striaticollis*.

Range.—Cloud forest (1400–1975 m elevation) along the eastern slope of the Andes from northern Ecuador to northwestern Peru (Fig. 2). Sight record of *Siptornis* above

Florencia, Dpto. Caquetá, Colombia, (Hilty and Brown 1986) probably refers to *S. s. nortoni*.

Measurements of type (mm).—Wing (chord) 61.0; tail 45.8; culmen (from anterior edge of nostril) 6.9.

Specimens examined.—*Siptornis s. striaticollis*: “Bogotá” or “Colombia” (MCZ Type, unsexed; UMMZ 1 unsexed; USNM 1 unsexed; AMNH 4 unsexed).—Magdalena Valley: Fusagasugá, Dpto. Cundinamarca (AMNH 1 ♂).—La Palma (“5500 ft”), Dpto. Huila (AMNH 1 ♀).—La Candela (1600 m), Dpto. Huila (ANSP 2 ♂, 1 ♀). *S. s. nortoni*: Ecuador: Type (MCZ); Cordillera de Cutucú (1975 m), Prov. Morona-Santiago (ANSP 1 ♀).—Km 45 Zamora Road (1670 m), Prov. Loja (MCZ 1 ♂).—Peru: Sapa-lache-Namballe mule trail, Dpto. Cajamarca (LSUMZ 3 ♂).

Remarks.—Concerning *S. s. striaticollis*, Chapman (1917:407) commented that “a specimen from La Palma is decidedly more fulvous below than one from Fusagasugá [sic] and two Bogotá skins.” Of the specimens we examined, the individual from Fusagasugá was the grayest ventrally; however, this characteristic appears to be uncorrelated with geography. All “Bogotá” specimens examined are referable to the nominate form.

We detected no consistent sexual or geographic variation in the diagnostic characters of *S. s. nortoni*. Size variation among populations appears to be insignificant.

Ecological notes.—Data on specimen tags and the few field observations of *Siptornis* in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (Eley et al. 1979, Ridgely 1980, Ridgely and Gaulin 1980) indicate that it has a cumulative elevational amplitude (over all locations, 1400–2300 m) of approximately 900 meters. This value is near the median elevational amplitude (= 1105 m; range of values 575–1875 m) recorded for 14 species of Furnariids that are widespread along the eastern slope of the Andes (Graves 1985). We suggest that the paucity of specimens in col-

lections is due to the inconspicuous appearance and behavior of *Siptornis*, rather than to rarity or narrow elevational distribution.

Past observers have likened the foraging behavior of *Siptornis* as parid-like or similar to that of piculets (*Picumnus* sp.) and xenops (*Xenops rutilans*). In the Cordillera de Cutucú, Robbins observed birds (n = 3) “hitching” along moss-covered limbs and probing into leaves and moss about 8–10 m above the ground in a manner reminiscent of some species of *Cranioleuca*.

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